



Department of Justice

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TWO METHAMPHETAMINE PIPELINES INTO EVANSVILLE BUSTED, HOGSETT ANNOUNCES

Twelve defendants arrested in separate multi-state methamphetamine trafficking operations

PRESS RELEASE

EVANSVILLE – U.S. Attorney Joseph H. Hogsett announced this morning the arrest of twelve defendants in what are alleged to have been two significant methamphetamine trafficking operations from California and Arizona into the Evansville-area. According to the federal charging documents, the drug trafficking allegedly involved the use of local drug couriers who would transport large quantities of methamphetamine across the country using personal and rental vehicles.

“The scourge of meth has taken a heavy toll on communities in our state, and the U.S. Attorney’s Office is redoubling efforts to combat organized drug activity in Southwestern Indiana,” Hogsett said. “I hope the penalties facing these defendants sends a message as to how seriously federal law treats those who help bring these terrible drugs to Hoosier neighborhoods.”

In the first case announced this morning, an investigation of Andrew Bastain, August Hirsch, and Adan Vasquez began in October 2012. Based on information obtained through the use of several cooperators, the three men were suspected of being responsible for the distribution of illegal drugs in the Evansville area. This investigation ultimately resulted in wiretaps of multiple cell phones used by the three suspects and their alleged associates.

Earlier this month, law enforcement agents began intercepting phone and text message activity between the defendants and suspected associate Jesus Torres-Flores, who allegedly used code language to discuss the trafficking of drugs into the Evansville area. Law enforcement also intercepted information allegedly discussing a planned road trip to California by defendant David Haas. In January 2013, investigators had tracked Bastain and Hirsch as they allegedly made a trip to San Jose, California.

On March 17, 2013, law enforcement allegedly observed Haas leave a rental car location at the Evansville Regional Airport. From March 18 through March 20, 2013, federal agents tracked the location of the vehicle Haas was allegedly driving as it traveled from Evansville to San Jose, California. When the vehicle arrived in San Jose, federal agents allegedly observed Haas exit the vehicle and check into a hotel near the San Jose Airport.

It is alleged in the complaint that over the course of the next day, Torres-Flores picked up the vehicle Haas had driven to California, replacing money that was hidden in the trunk compartment with pounds of methamphetamine. Law enforcement agents observed Haas leaving the hotel the afternoon of March 21, at which point he was allegedly observed meeting defendant Bobby Bass at a gas station, who was driving a truck with Indiana license plates. The vehicles departed together, at which point a traffic stop and search of both vehicles took place.

The complaint alleges that law enforcement located eleven different one-pound containers of methamphetamine within the vehicle driven by Haas, as well as eight different one-pound containers of methamphetamine within the vehicle driven by Bass. After being questioned by federal agents, Haas allegedly admitted that both he and Bass had been hired by Bastain to drive to California and purchase methamphetamine for distribution in the Evansville area.

The defendants named in the complaint have all been arrested and are in federal custody:

- Andrew Bastain, age 27, of Evansville, Indiana
- August Hirsch, age 28, of Evansville, Indiana
- Adan Vasquez, age 35, of Evansville, Indiana
- David Haas, age 43, of Evansville, Indiana
- Bobby Bass, age 40, of Evansville, Indiana
- Jesus Torres-Flores, age 41, of East Palo Alto, California

In the second case unsealed today, it is alleged that a similar, but separate, methamphetamine trafficking operation was busted by federal law enforcement in the last week. In this case, prosecutors allege that six defendants engaged in a scheme between June 2012 and March 2013 to import large quantities of illegal drugs from a source in Arizona into the Evansville area.

The scheme allegedly involved the leadership of William Elder, who was responsible for obtaining the methamphetamine from various sources of supply. He was allegedly assisted in this by defendants Everett Tarr and Michael Clark, who helped arrange the deals and acted as couriers between Arizona and Evansville. Clark was assisted by defendant Brenda Deer when he would transport the drugs. Once the drugs were delivered to Elder, the methamphetamine would allegedly be distributed by these individuals, as well as two other local distributors, Terry Ward and Lauri Cupp.

All of the defendants are now in custody in this case, and Hogsett noted that the arrest of Clark and Deer took place on February 21, 2013, after a high-speed chase with local law

enforcement. The pair are alleged to have run a red light while speeding, nearly causing an accident, before throwing a quantity of methamphetamine out the window of their car.

The defendants named in the indictment include:

- William H. Elder, age 71, of Posey County
- Everett C. Tarr, age 56, of Evansville
- Terry L. Ward, age 61, of Posey County
- Michael L. Clark, age 54, of Evansville
- Brenda G. Deer, age 47, of Evansville
- Lauri A. Cupp, age 45, of Posey County

These investigations were the result of outstanding law enforcement work by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, and Drug Enforcement Administration agents in Evansville, as well as Texas and California. Local partners included task force officers from the Evansville - Vanderburgh County Drug Task Force, and the Posey County Sheriff's Department.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorneys Matthias D. Onderak and Lauren Wheatley, who are prosecuting the two cases for the government, all twelve of the defendants face ten years to life imprisonment if they are found guilty. Many of the defendants also face sentencing enhancements that could possibly raise their minimum sentence to twenty years. They also face significant fines and the possibility of years of federal supervision after their prison terms are served.

Informations, indictments, and criminal complaints are only a charge and are not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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